

2018 Current Fiscal Year Report: Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials

Report Run Date: 06/05/2019 09:01:03 PM

1. Department or Agency

Department of Veterans Affairs

2. Fiscal Year

2018

3. Committee or Subcommittee

Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials

3b. GSA Committee No.

1328

4. Is this New During Fiscal Year?

No

5. Current Charter

08/16/2017

6. Expected Renewal Date

08/16/2019

7. Expected Term Date

8a. Was Terminated During Fiscal Year?

No

8b. Specific Termination Authority

8c. Actual Term Date

9. Agency Recommendation for Next Fiscal Year

Continue

10a. Legislation Req to Terminate?

No

10b. Legislation Pending?

Not Applicable

11. Establishment Authority

Statutory (Congress Created)

12. Specific Establishment Authority

38 U.S.C. 2401

13. Effective Date

06/18/1973

14. Committee Type

Continuing

14c. Presidential?

No

15. Description of Committee

Non Scientific Program Advisory Board

16a. Total Number of Reports

1

16b. Report Date

11/01/2017

Report Title

Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials October 2017 Recommendations

Number of Committee Reports Listed: 1

17a. Open 1 17b. Closed 0 17c. Partially Closed 1 Other Activities 0 17d. Total 2

Meetings and Dates

Purpose

On the morning of Tuesday, October 31, the Committee convened an open session at the Jefferson Barracks Medical Center and heard briefings on NCA Modernization efforts and Committee recommendations. In the afternoon (1:00PM to 4:00PM), the Committee convened in a closed session to tour the NCA National Training Center and the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. On November 1, the Committee convened an open session and continue briefings on Committee recommendations and a briefing on the Veterans Legacy Program.

Start

End

10/31/2017 - 11/01/2017

On May 15, 2018, the Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials convened in Washington, DC to discuss the 2017 Recommendations, status updates from NCA program offices and Ex-Officios. Mr. Peter O'Rourke, then VA Chief of Staff, also met with the Committee to discuss the goals/priorities for VA and current issues impacting the National Cemetery Scheduling Office (NCSO). The Office of General Counsel also provided annual Ethics training and the Advisory Committee Management Office provided refresher information on management and operation according to the Federal Advisory Committee Act. On May 16, 2018, the Committee continued status updates, discussed new charges to form workgroups to review the NCSO process and the Emblems of Belief determination process. The Committee also held a closed session to visit the Congressional Cemetery, which is a private cemetery that contains VA gravesites. NCA presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Chair, John Kelly, whose term expired on August 31st.

05/16/2018 - 05/17/2018

Number of Committee Meetings Listed: 2

	Current FY	Next FY
18a(1). Personnel Pmts to Non-Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18a(2). Personnel Pmts to Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18a(3). Personnel Pmts to Federal Staff	\$80,213.00	\$80,213.00
18a(4). Personnel Pmts to Non-Member Consultants	\$0.00	\$0.00
18b(1). Travel and Per Diem to Non-Federal Members	\$0.00	\$0.00
18b(2). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Members	\$15,030.00	\$23,706.00
18b(3). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Staff	\$2,796.00	\$2,796.00
18b(4). Travel and Per Diem to Non-member Consultants	\$0.00	\$0.00
18c. Other(rents,user charges, graphics, printing, mail, etc.)	\$4,400.00	\$5,000.00
18d. Total	\$102,439.00	\$111,715.00
19. Federal Staff Support Years (FTE)	0.60	0.60

20a. How does the Committee accomplish its purpose?

The Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials is authorized by title 38 U.S.C. § 2401 and charged with providing advice to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the administration of national cemeteries, the selection of cemetery sites, erection of appropriate memorials and adequacy of Federal burial benefits. The Committee also submits recommendations to the Secretary, as appropriate, that may call for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy changes and/or other measures designed to positively impact VA's burial benefits program, cemetery administration and the delivery of benefits. The Committee makes periodic reports and recommendations to the Secretary. The Secretary takes such reports and recommendations under advisement for possible action. In the May 9-10, 2017 meeting, Members received charges from NCA to form workgroups for Outreach Ambassador Program, Digital Memorialization, and Medal of Honor Medallion. These charges directly align to Modernization priorities to Improve Timeliness (e.g. ensuring Veterans, spouses and/or dependents receive less or no interruption to benefit), Provide Greater Choice, & Modernize Technologies (efforts to enhance service to Veterans, spouses, and/or dependents by streamlining and instituting infrastructure improvements to VA facilities. In the meeting held on October 31 and November 1, 2017, in St. Louis, MO, the National Cemetery Administration provided status updates on NCA

Modernization efforts and the 2017 recommendations. The Committee also visited the National Cemetery Scheduling Office, Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, and the National Training Center. In the meeting held on May 15 -16, 2018, the Committee convened in Washington, DC to discuss the current status of the charges, the National Cemetery Scheduling Office, and to receive Annual Ethics Training. Attendees also included Mr. Peter O'Rourke, then VA Chief of Staff and representatives from the VA Advisory Committee Management Office. The Committee visited the historic, Congressional Cemetery, which also contains gravesites managed by NCA. The Committee received charges from NCA to form workgroups to look at the current regulation for Emblems of Belief determinations and to advise on business process improvements for the National Cemetery Scheduling Office.

20b. How does the Committee balance its membership?

This Committee is uniquely qualified to provide guidance and advice to the National Cemetery Administration management and staff. Its composition includes representatives of Veterans Service Organizations, military retirees and business and community activists. The Department strives to develop a Committee membership that represents members with diverse professional and personal qualifications; experience in military service, military deployments, working with Veterans; committee subject matter expertise; and working in large and complex organizations. The Committee shall represent to the extent possible, Veterans of diverse eras and branches of service, as well as diversity in race/ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, and geographical background. Ex-officio members represent Arlington National Cemetery, National Park Service and the American Battle Monuments Commission and are familiar with administering cemetery operations and Federal government service.

20c. How frequent and relevant are the Committee Meetings?

The Committee usually meets two times per year at the call of the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs and in accordance with its charter. Committee members receive timely updates and briefings at each meeting from the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs, National Cemetery Administration's senior leadership and VA management. Agenda items are reviewed by the Committee Chair and Designated Federal Officer to ensure their relevance to current and emerging issues. In FY 2018, the Committee held two meetings on October 31 - November 1, 2017, in St. Louis, MO, and May 15-16, 2018 in Washington, D.C.

20d. Why can't the advice or information this committee provides be obtained elsewhere?

The Committee is required by section 2401 of title 38 U.S.C. The Committee assists the

Secretary in ensuring that plans and programs are meeting the needs of Veterans and their eligible family members and meeting the mandate to maintain our national cemeteries and national shrines. Committee members also provide outreach by providing information about burial benefits to the public. It is the only public body in which all federal agencies charged with administration of a national cemeteries program are represented.

20e. Why is it necessary to close and/or partially closed committee meetings?

The Committee meetings are open to the public unless except when the Committee is conducting tours of VA facilities, participating in off-site events, and participating in workgroup sessions. Tours of VA facilities are closed, to protect Veterans' privacy and personal information.

21. Remarks

The VA Secretary reappointed seven members and appointed four new members. The Committee has eleven members. VA anticipates full membership of twelve in FY19.

Designated Federal Officer

Christine Booker Hamilton Program Analyst/Outreach Coordinator

Committee Members	Start	End	Occupation	Member Designation
Beavers, Leslie	10/01/2006	12/31/2019	Brigadier General, Army Retired, Active in civic and Veterans service organizations	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Braatz, Heather	12/02/2016	12/31/2020	Professional Development Coordinator for National Funeral Directors Association	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Carroll, Bonnie	12/02/2016	10/01/2017	Major USAF (Retired), Founder of Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, Defense Health Board, Board of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Durham-Aguilera, Karen	05/09/2017	12/31/2020	Executive Director, Army National Military Cemeteries, Arlington National Cemetery	Ex Officio Member
Figlioli, Michael	12/02/2016	12/31/2020	Deputy Director Veterans Foreign Wars Colonel, Army (Retired)	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Fisher, Joann	12/02/2016	12/31/2020	Post Service Officer, American Legion, Active member of various Veterans and military organizations	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Horne, Michael	02/02/2015	08/31/2018	Colonel ANG, Retired, Director, New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member

Kelly, John (Jack)	09/01/2004	08/31/2018	CEO Kelly & Associates.gov and public affairs firm	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Lightfoot, Gordon	04/29/2016	04/30/2020	Chair of the Support Committee for the Tallahassee National Cemetery	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Moakler, Kathleen	08/24/2018	07/31/2020	Director, Survivor Advocacy for the Tragedy Assistance Program	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Ruester, James	12/02/2016	10/25/2017	Public Affairs Officer, former VA employee for many years, serving Veterans in Riverside, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, and Orange Counties	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Saunders, Edward	09/10/2018	07/31/2020	Yellowstone County Veterans Board	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Sellers, Charles	10/01/2016	12/31/2020	National Park Service	Ex Officio Member Special
Smith, Edith	02/02/2015	02/29/2020	Gold Star Wives and various Veterans and Survivors advocacy groups	Government Employee (SGE) Member
Sole, Thomas	10/01/2016	12/31/2020	American Battle Monument Commission	Ex Officio Member Special
Strickland, Joey	09/10/2018	08/31/2020	Secretary, Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs	Government Employee (SGE) Member
Teppara, Dino	08/24/2018	07/31/2020	Public Affairs Officer USNR	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Trussell, Marianne	12/02/2016	12/31/2020	Support Committee for the Tallahassee National Cemetery	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member

Number of Committee Members Listed: 18

Narrative Description

The Committee provides advice to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on VA's administration of national cemeteries and makes recommendations to the Secretary on issues related to the selection of cemetery sites, erection of appropriate memorials and the adequacy of Federal burial benefits for all eligible veterans.

What are the most significant program outcomes associated with this committee?

Checked if Applies

Improvements to health or safety

☐

Trust in government

☒

Major policy changes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advance in scientific research	<input type="checkbox"/>
Effective grant making	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved service delivery	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increased customer satisfaction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Implementation of laws or regulatory requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Outcome Comments

NA

What are the cost savings associated with this committee?

Checked if Applies

None	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unable to Determine	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Under \$100,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$100,000 - \$500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$500,001 - \$1,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$5,000,001 - \$10,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over \$10,000,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cost Savings Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cost Savings Comments

NA

What is the approximate Number of recommendations produced by this committee for the life of the committee?

112

Number of Recommendations Comments

This is a total of recommendations for FY 2003 through FY 2018.

What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Fully implemented by the agency?

89%

% of Recommendations Fully Implemented Comments

Subject to budget constraints, NCA attempts to implement committee recommendations.

What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Partially implemented by the agency?

10%

% of Recommendations Partially Implemented Comments

2017 recommendations are pending additional actions or discussions in the National Cemetery Administration.

Does the agency provide the committee with feedback regarding actions taken to implement recommendations or advice offered?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Applicable ☐

Agency Feedback Comments

The feedback is provided in written format that is mailed to the members and discussed as a part of the agenda during each advisory committee meeting.

What other actions has the agency taken as a result of the committee's advice or recommendation?

Checked if Applies

Reorganized Priorities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reallocated resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Issued new regulation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposed legislation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved grants or other payments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Action Comments

NA

Is the Committee engaged in the review of applications for grants?

No

Grant Review Comments

NA

How is access provided to the information for the Committee's documentation?

Checked if Applies

Contact DFO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Online Agency Web Site
Online Committee Web Site
Online GSA FACA Web Site
Publications
Other



Access Comments

N/A